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ABSTRACT

This pilot study was designed to appraise the effectiveness of two methods for facilitating learning in the affective domain in an elementary school setting. The two methods evaluated were: (1) teacher reinforcement of verbalization of feelings; and (2) feelings classes. Pre- and post-treatment measures on the two groups of randomly assigned third graders included: (1) observation of childrens' behavior in class; (2) childrens' self-social constructs; and (3) sociometric choices. Findings indicated that the two groups differed significantly in several categories of pupil behavior in the classroom. The feelings classes seemed to promote an open class atmosphere while the other method lent support to a teacher centered class. There was no significant difference between the two groups for the childrens' Self-Social Construct measures and sociometric choices. The importance of the study lies not only with the reported findings, but also with the feasibility of the two basically developmental approaches in classroom programs. (TL)

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FEELINGS. . . TO FEAR OR TO FREE?

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Introduction

It has been nearly six years since the TAXONOMY OF EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: AFFECTIVE DOMAIN was written. At the time, the authors compared the area of effective learning to a Pandora's box. What it contains is generally repressed and seldom utilized by a total school staff (Krathwohol et al. 1964). There was an initial positive response to the taxonomy publication. The impact, however, was brief and school programs remained unchanged in spite of the calls for action in affective learning (Boy, 1968; Borton, 1969).

The deficit in emphasis for affective learning is appalling, if not frightening, by virtue of the social scene witnessed in the 60's (Kelley, 1965; Llewellyn & Cahoon, 1965; and Strunk, 1969). Quoting reports from the 1968 Systematic Observation Conference, Myrick (1969) states that "less than one-half of one percent of teacher talk is directed to a child's feelings, either negative or positive (p. 38)." It is indeed very unfortunate that affective learning occurs in a haphazard rather than a planned manner. Affect is an inseparable part of any learning situation (Boy, 1968; Faust, 1968; and Grams, 1966). Integrating the feelings into the classroom instruction can help reduce attitudinal blocks and resistance to learning (Birnbaum, 1969). Kelley (1965) remarks that educators have given little or no regard for the feelings of the learner; consequently, they find themselves unskilled in promoting development in the affective domain.

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Clearly, a need exists for developing innovative approaches in helping children recognize their feelings and express them in desir-

able ways. Using teacher reinforcement for pupil's verbalization of feelings is one method of promoting the expression of feelings in a classroom situation. Beginning with Greenspoon's (1951) pioneer study, demonstrating that verbal behavior was amenable to operant conditioning, numerous investigations have been conducted to establish the merits of verbal conditioning. Of relevance to the present study are investigations dealing with verbalization of emotional words through reinforcement (Krasner and Collins, 1961; Ullman, Weiss and Krasner, 1963; and Krasner, 1965).

On the other hand, proponents of elementary school counseling would assign to the emotional factor a role as important if not greater than the traditional components of education. Margaret E. Jenkins, one time president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (1966) writes,

> "It is inescapable that those of us who day in and day out work on behalf of children should be drawn to the big dream. ..and to hope that children will study emotional health in the classroom, that they will explore the sources and costs of traditional anger, prejudices, hatred, just as today they study the causes of weather and war (p. 1)."

The program designed by Human Development Training Institute (1969), the mental health project prepared by Ojemann, (1965) and the feelings classes recommended by Faust (1968) are examples of recent attempts to implement the big dream mentioned by Jenkins.

While the first two of these examples are more or less package programs, Faust's feelings class provides instead a set of general guidelines which can be modified to meet local and regional needs. The more prescriptive package programs which are standardized in one region of the country are often unusable in another region.

Additional research is needed, however, before recommending programs suitable in the area of affective domain. Two approaches,

teacher reinforcement of pupil verbalizations of feelings and feelings classes seem to be fruitful areas to investigate. Therefore, the focus of this pilot study was the appraisal of these two approaches in an elementary school setting. Specifically, this study was aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

1. Is it possible to initiate and maintain verbal expression of feelings by pupils in elementary schools through teacher reinforcement?

2. Is it possible to help elementary school pupils become aware of their feelings through participation in feelings classes?

3. How do teacher reinforcement and feelings classes influence pupils' behavior in class, their self-esteem, dependency and individuation and sociometric choices?

Experimental Procedure

Subjects

The subjects for this project consisted of two third grade classes in a local, racially mixed elementary school. The two self-contained classes were randomly assigned to the two treatments, namely teacher reinforcement of pupils' verbalization of feelings (Treatment for Group I) and participation in feelings classes (Treatment for Group II). The two groups were comparable in terms of sex, race, and intellectual status.

Description of Treatments

Treatment for Group I (teacher reinforcement of pupils' verbalization of feelings). At the beginning of the treatment period, the teacher made the following announcement to her class every morning of the first week: "I realize that you may have different feelings at different times. It is allright for you to

let me know how you feel." She, then, asked the pupils how they felt. If any pupil expressed a feeling the teacher said, "I am glad you can let me know how you feel" and gave the child a feelings button which was a self adhesive file folder label with a feeling written on it. The child wore the button as long as he wanted to during the day and then placed it in his feelings diary. This provided a self-recording system for the feelings verbalized by pupils. After the first week, the teacher let the pupils express their feelings and obtain the appropriate feelings button on their own initiative.

Contrary to the intentions of the investigators, the teacher seemed to have designated a certain time during the day for children to express their feelings. The efforts of the investigators to help the teacher reinforce verbal expression of feelings when they occurred were futile. The teacher's reasons for doing it her way were that children will not express feelings unless given a time to do so; and that it was difficult to interrupt her teaching in order to give a feelings' button. In view of the limitation introduced by teacher behavior, it may be appropriate to qualify this treatment as combining self acknowledgement of feelings with verbalization of feelings through teacher reinforcement and is henceforth referred to as TRSA in this paper.

Treatment for Group II (feelings classes). Twelve feelings class sessions were conducted which included writing and drawing exercises, small and large group discussion, talking in dyads, role playing and confrontations. Simple writing exercises had to be used because the children had difficulty in reading and writing. Cartoon pictures were used

for identifying a variety of feelings. Free drawing exercises indicating how the children felt were used at the beginning of almost every session. A feelings pie exercise was also used which consisted of each child dividing a circle into parts signifying the feelings he had known.

The discussions centered around two main questions: What are feelings? What can we do when we have feelings? The feelings discussed were happy, good, proud, angry, afraid, hurt, upset and disappointed. Situations in everyday life of an elementary school pupil such as "I don't want you on my team", and "I don't get to answer teacher's questions", were role played. Confrontation was used in the case of children who constantly hit others. All of the activities were judged to be consistent with the objectives of feelings classes outlined by Faust (1968). These objectives are that

> "(a) all kinds of feelings exist, (b) almost everyone owns almost every kind of feeling, (c) there is nothing wrong with feelings, (d) to have a feeling is not the same as acting out the feeling, and (e) there are socially approved ways of expressing almost any feeling (p. 70)."

Collection of data

Pre and post-treatment measures for the project included: (1) Observation of children's behavior in class, (2) Children's self-social constructs, and (3) Sociometric choices.

Observation. Three observers were used in the project with the interobserver's reliabilities ranging between 86 and 92 percent. The classes were observed one hour a day for three days a week for two weeks. Using a table of random numbers, ten children were selected for each day's observation and were observed

for one minute each in a random order. The observations were repeated four times during the hour, consequently four one-minute observations on each child were obtained. There was no substitution for absenteeism.

Ten seconds time samples were used for recording observation. Each time sample consisted of "looking" for five seconds and "checking" for five seconds. A pre-recorded tape with earphone attachments provided the time samples. The behaviors included for observations were, working at a desk, overt involvement in a lesson, interaction with the teacher, interaction with peers, movement within the classroom, and activity unrelated to the lesson.

Children's Self-Socail Construct Test. The Children's Self-Social Construct (CSSC) Test is a paper and pencil test which was administered to each group before and after the treatment. The instructions were orally given by the investigators while the teacher checked to see if the children followed directions. The CSSC test has been standardized and validated by Long et al. (1967). In the present study, only the sections on self-esteem, social dependency and individuation were used.

Sociometric choices. Sociometric choices were obtained through a game of passing the ball. The game consisted of having the children stand in a big circle, giving a volley ball to one child at random, asking him to call out the name of the person to whom he was passing the ball, and passing the ball. The child who got the ball repeated the process. Calling out the name served the twofold purpose of recording the choices and avoiding ambiguity if the ball was misdirected. The game was continued for ten minutes.

Results and Discussion

Pupils' Verbalization of Feelings in Group I

The number of verbalizations of feelings by children ranged from 12 to 24 per child. There were 315 positive feelings and 157 negative feelings in all expressed by the children. Variety was noticed in the feelings expressed by children each day and by each child for the treatment period.

Behavior in Classroom

The pre- and post-treatment observations in the two classes are summarized in Table I. Procedures described by Garrett (1958) were followed for computing the significance of difference between the two groups.

It is clearly seen from Table 1 that the two groups were not significantly different from each other in the amount of pupil behavior observed in the different categories during pre-treatment observation except in the category movement within the class. Post-treatment comparison indicated significant differences in the categories working at a desk, pupil overt involvement in a lesson, interaction with the teacher and interaction with peers. Results for the category movement within class indicated significant difference, but such difference also existed in the pre-treatment data. The category, unrelated activity, was not significant. One overall conclusion from the data presented in Table 1 was that pupils in Group II (feelings classes) seem to have become more free to interact with peers and with the teacher, and to respond to the teacher. The units for working at a desk had significantly decreased. The opposite is true for Group I in each of these

categories of behavior.

Insert Table 1 here

What seemed to have existed at the end of the treatments was a clear difference in classroom atmospheres. In the TRSA group there was less pupil involvement and fewer interactions between teacher and pupils and between pupils. These behaviors can be typically expected in a content-centered or teacher-centered classroom. The reader is reminded that the TRSA group included teacher reinforcement as well as children's self-acknowledgement of their feelings. By contrast, the interaction and activities of children in Group II (feelings classes) are characteristic of those common to the pupil-centered or open classrooms. The importance of this finding may be that it is possible for teachers to have the type of classroom atmosphere they choose. Which one of these should be promoted is a question of values, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper. The results indicate that teachers do have a choice. They can obtain the objectives of a feelings class if they choose to include feelings classes as a part of the curriculum.

Self-Social Constructs of Groups I and II

The self-social constructs measured in this study included self-esteem (horizontal and vertical), social dependency and individuation. The mean scores on these dimensions for the two experimental groups at the pre-and post-treatment assessment are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 here

An analysis of covariance using the mean scores given in Table 2 yielded no significant F ratios. The trends that can be observed from an examination of the adjusted means are that the feelings class had a higher mean score on horizontal and total self-esteem and on individuation; Group TRSA has a higher mean score on vertical esteem and social dependency. If these trends would be substantiated by extended treatment, it would be logical to conclude that the treatments are different and do obtain different effects.

Sociometric Choices

The changes in sociometric choices received by children in the two groups are presented in Table 3. Although the sociometric technique pass the ball was continued for 10 minutes, the data used in Table 3 is limited to 33 turns for each group, in order to make the sociometric choices comparable for both groups. The X^2 statistic for the frequence distribution in Table 3 was not significant.

Insert Table 3 here

Elaboration of the passing the ball game as a sociometric technique is in order here. The researchers have conducted further experimentation with the technique with a different group of third graders and obtained test-retest reliability of 0.65 (Garret, 1958). The rank-order correlation between the sociometric data obtained through passing the ball and traditional paper-and

pencil test was 0.78. With primary grade children, passing the ball technique has some definite advantages: (1) it is less time consuming even when the paper-and-pencil test is group administered; (2) it does not pose reading and spelling difficulties; (3) it does not require the teacher to use the sociometric data to make special grouping arrangement; (4) it shows real choices and not desired or forced choices; and (5) it reveals depths of the dynamics of the group--for instance, one child receives the ball seven times from seven different children but each time sends it to the same child (not one of the seven who passed the ball to him). There needs to be a reawakening in the area of sociometric testing, particularly with primary grade children.

Summary and Conclusions

It was the purpose of this pilot study to appraise the effectiveness of two methods for facilitating learning in the affective domain with elementary school pupils. Teacher reinforcement of verbalization of feelings including self acknowledgement and feelings classes were the two methods implemented and evaluated.

The findings of this study indicate that after the experimental treatment the two groups differed significantly in several categories of pupil behavior in the classroom. The feelings classes seem to promote an open class atmosphere while the other, teacher reinforcement and self acknowledgement, lends its support for a teacher centered class. There was no significant difference between the groups for the Children's Self-Social Construct measures and sociometric choices.

The importance of this study is derived not from the findings as much as from the feasibility of the two methods used. The conclusions arising in this aspect are:

1. The two methods used in this study are basically developmental approaches and could be applied to all children in a third grade classroom.

2. It is possible to encourage children to verbalize their feelings through the teacher reinforcement and self-acknowledgement method.

3. It was found that third graders are capable of talking about their feelings and of developing socially appropriate expression of these feelings.

4. It was also found that third graders have difficulty listening to other children in classroom discussions. As a consequence, small group discussions and talking in dyads were found to be more fruitful than the total group experience.

5. Most of the existing reading and writing materials on affective learning had limited use with the children in this study.

Encouraging elementary school children to talk about their feelings is indeed like opening Pandora's box. Children can talk about feelings, they are interested in feelings and they can discuss appropriate ways of handling fears, joy, sorrow and prejudice. It does take careful planning and extensive skill in group dynamics to implement such a program. The long-term value of feelings classes to the child's total development and learning merits considerable additional attention.

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TABLE 1

Percentage of Behavior Units Observed in the Two Groups During Pre- and Post-Treatment Observations and the t's for their Differences

Behavior Category	Behavior Units Given as Percent of Total Units Observed					
	Pre-Treatment			Post-Treatment		
	Group I	Group II	t	Group I	Group II	t
Working at a desk	51.121	48.276	1.382	60.968	38.598	15.84*
Pupil overt involvement in a lesson	2.552	3.634	1.528	2.253	6.695	5.09*
Interaction with the teacher	7.192	6.710	0.459	3.085	6.485	3.73*
Interaction with peers	11.368	13.700	0.980	12.344	20.397	5.07*
Movement within the class	0.464	2.423	4.116*	0.334	4.812	6.826*
Unrelated activity	20.649	18.919	1.055	18.182	18.724	0.323
Others[a]	0.618	1.396		1.585	0.315	
Unobservable[b]	6.032	4.939		1.252	3.975	

*Significant at 0.01 level

[a]Behaviors in other categories that were too small to merit analysis.
[b]Children were out of sight of the observer.

TABLE 2

MEAN SCORES ON SELF ESTEEM SOCIAL DEPENDENCY AND INDIVIDUATION DURING PRE- AND POST- TREATMENT ASSESSMENT FOR GROUPS I AND II.

GROUPS		MEAN SCORES AND ADJUSTED MEANS									
		ESTEEM						SOC. DEPENDENCY		INDIVIDUATION	
	Horizontal		Vertical		Total						
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post		Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Group I N = 23	12.39	14.04	14.61	15.13	47.0	29.7		2.17	2.06	1.96	1.83
Adjusted Mean	14.11		15.32		29.59			1.99		1.80	
Group II N = 23	14.17	14.78	16.57	15.30	20.76	30.90		1.91	1.44	1.47	1.96
Adjusted Mean	14.71		15.11		29.71			1.49		1.98	

TABLE 3

CHANGES IN SOCIOMETRIC CHOICES RECEIVED BY

CHILDREN IN GROUPS I AND II

	Frequencies of Change in Sociometric Choices		
	Increase	Decrease	Same
Group I N = 23	7	7	9
Group II N = 23	7	11	5

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